

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action dated July 5, 2006. Applicant has amended claims 1-3, 7, 9, 12, 14, 16, 24-26, 30, 32, 35, 37, 38, 45 and 47; cancelled claims 13, 17-21, 36, 39-43, 48 and 49; and added new claims 50-77. Claims 1-12, 14-16, 22-35, 37, 38, 44-47 and 50-77 are pending.

Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 17-21, 39-43, 45 and 49 as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 18 depended from dependent claim 13. Dependent claim 13 depended directly from independent claim 1. Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to include the subject matter of claims 13 and 18, and cancelled claims 13 and 18. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-16, 22 and 23 are in condition for allowance.

Similarly, claim 40 depended from dependent claim 36. Dependent claim 36 depended directly from independent claim 24. Applicant has amended independent claim 24 to include the subject matter of claims 36 and 40, and cancelled claims 36 and 40. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 24-38 and 44-46 are in condition for allowance.

Claim 49 depended directly from independent claim 47. Applicant has amended independent claim 47 to include the subject matter of claim 49, and cancelled claim 49. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 47 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 17 and 19 depended from dependent claim 13. Dependent claim 13 depended directly from independent claim 1. Applicant has added a new independent claim 50 that includes the subject matter of claims 1, 13 and 17; added a new independent claim 54 that includes the subject matter of claims 1, 13 and 19; and cancelled claims 17 and 19. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 50-57 are in condition for allowance.

Claim 20 depended directly from independent claim 1. Applicant has added a new independent claim 58 that includes the subject matter of claims 1 and 20, and cancelled claim 20. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 58-62 are in condition for allowance.

Claims 39 and 41 depended from dependent claim 36. Dependent claim 36 depended directly from independent claim 24. Applicant has added a new claim 63 that includes the subject matter of claims 24, 36 and 39; added a new claim 67 that includes the subject matter of claims 24, 36 and 41, and cancelled claims 39 and 41. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 63-70 are in condition for allowance.

Claim 42 depended directly from independent claim 24. Applicant has added a new claim 71 that includes the subject matter of claims 24 and 42, and cancelled claim 42. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 71-75 are in condition for allowance.

Claim 45 depended from dependent claim 44. Dependent claim 44 depended directly from independent claim 24. Applicant has added a new claim 76 that includes the subject matter of claims 24, 44 and 45. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 76 and 77 are in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 7, 9, 23, 25, 26, 30, 32, 44 and 47 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Hatlestad et al. (US 2005/0042589, herein referred to as Hatlestad). The Examiner also rejected claims 4-6, 8, 10, 27-29, 31 and 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatlestad; rejected claims 11 and 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatlestad in view of Remmers et al. (US 5,645,053); rejected claims 12, 13, 35, 36 and 48 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatlestad in view of Poezervera et al. (US 6,773,404, herein referred to as Poezervera); rejected claims 14, 15 and 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatlestad in view of Poezervera, and further in view of Park et al. (US 6,928,324); rejected claims 16 and 38 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatlestad in view of Poezervera, and further in view of Gammans (US 5,116,852); and rejected claims 22 and 46 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatlestad in view of Poezervera further in view of Civelli et al. (US 6,884,596). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections. The applied references fail to disclose or suggest the inventions defined by Applicant's claims, and provide no teaching that would have suggested the desirability of modification to arrive at the claimed invention.

However, in order to expedite allowance of this Application, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 24 and 47 to include subject matter that the Examiner has indicated is allowable. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully suggests that these rejections are rendered moot.

Applicant reserves the right to pursue any cancelled claims and non-cancelled claims as previously presented in future submissions or one or more continuation applications.

Rejection for Obviousness-type Double Patenting:

The Examiner provisionally rejected claims 1-49 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 2, 5-10, 12-23, 25-29, 32-58, 60-66 and 68 of copending Application No. 10/825,955; claims 1-11, 12, 14, 16-18, 19-30, 32-44, 46-50, 62, 67 and 68 of copending Application No. 10/825,964; claims 1, 3-8, 11-16, 19-24, 26-30, 34-36, 38, 39, 41, 44-48 and 69-76 of copending Application No. 10/825,965; claims 1-11, 16-34, 38-47, 48, 69, 70, 73-79, 83, 84, 87-92 and 96-99 of copending Application No. 10/826,925, claims 1, 3, 8, 9 and 13-15 of copending Application No. 11/081,811; and claims 1-7, 25 and 28-37 of copending Application No. 11/081,873.

A Terminal Disclaimer accompanies this Amendment. The disclaimer is made to expedite issuance and is not intended as an admission that any claim of the present application is the same or an obvious variant of those of U.S. Application Nos. 10/825,955, 10/825,964, 10/825,965, 10/826,925, 11/081,811, or 11/081,873. This disclaimer obviates the double patenting rejection and places claims 1-12, 14-16, 22-35, 37, 38, 44-47 and 50-77 in a condition for allowance.

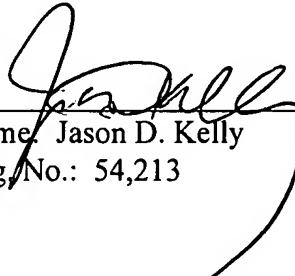
CONCLUSION

All claims in this application are in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and prompt allowance of all pending claims. Please charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to deposit account number 50-1778. The Examiner is invited to telephone the below-signed attorney to discuss this application.

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10/5/06
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